

### GPS Update

by Richard English

Welcome to 2016! With the holidays behind us and daylight hours slowly increasing, we once again greet a new year and the challenges and opportunities it has in store for us.

One notable change GPS will experience this year is a transition in newsletter publishing responsibility from Kurt Johnston, who tirelessly compiled local history, updates, and interesting stories for our enjoyment for over 17 years. His commitment to the Galway Preservation Society is an inspiration to those of us who want to keep history relevant and interesting. It's rare to find someone to fill such an essential role for so many years, but we were fortunate to find such a person in Kurt. Please thank him the next time you see him for all of the time he expended on our behalf.

I would be remiss if I didn't also thank two other volunteers who are essential in getting these written words to you every month. Evelyn Hanna keeps our website current and prepares the electronic version of the newsletter that is e-mailed to approximately half of our membership. Jeanne Frank handles the collating, folding, and mailing of the hardcopy version of this newsletter, plus delivers it to our local library and school. Evelyn and Jeanne will continue to work with Mary Cuffe Perez as Mary works with a small group of volunteers to create and collect new articles. Please support Mary when she approaches you for ideas or solicits contributions of your time or effort. Content is what makes a newsletter worth reading! We will all benefit from a renewed focus on this important task.

We enjoyed a wonderful program last month entitled "Christmas Keepsakes and Reflections" where members shared memories and traditions from past holidays. We heard the touching backstories behind valued ornaments, reviewed a compilation of family holiday cards, learned of childhood gifts whose significance grew over time, and gleaned "memory fragments" from moments past. We also shared family traditions and learned how challenging Christmas morning could be on a working farm where chores must be done before children can begin celebrating the holiday. Most of all, we enjoyed an atmosphere of fellowship. Thank you to all who participated and prepared your heartfelt contributions.

Our next monthly meeting will be Monday, January 4th, entitled "Lost Landmarks of Saratoga County." Our speaker will be Anne Clothier, the Director of Education at Brookside Museum. The GPS Board of Trustees will also meet on Wednesday, January 13th, for one of its quarterly meetings. As always, GPS members are welcome at all board meetings. Have a Happy New Year!

### Upcoming Dates

#### **Jan 4 – Next Member Meeting at Town Hall**

7:00 pm Social Gathering

7:30 pm Business Meeting

7:45 pm Program

#### **Jan 13 – Next Board Meeting at Town Hall**

7:00 pm



*Dick Denner explores a foundation wall along the abandoned road.*

## **A Lost and Found Galway Thoroughfare**

Article and Photo by Mary Cuffe Perez

Rachel Scripter, who lived her entire life on her family's farm on Alexander Road, told me one snowy winter's day, as we sat around her wood stove, about a road that connected Hermance Road to Alexander Road. While the stove popped and the kettle hissed, Rachel told me about the family who lived along the road. She wondered if anything remained of their small farm and orchard, abandoned many years before.

Intrigued, I decided to follow the road that runs north and south, beginning directly across from the old Mechanick homestead. Even cloaked in first growth forest, the road is clearly defined, wide enough for two lanes of horse and wagon or motor vehicles to pass, and bordered on each side by stone walls. Travelling that road had to be pretty tough going at times, as it gradually descends to a stream and wetland, a challenge to cross even on foot. Once I had rock-hopped and teetered across to the other side, the road picked up again, gently rising uphill. At the crest of the hill, just where Rachael told me it would be, was a break in the stone wall, and a few yards beyond, the moss-covered stones of the foundations of house and barn, and beyond that, a few surviving apple trees.

Recently, I walked that road again with two veteran woods roamers, Owen Germain and Dick Denner, both of Galway. Dick is a reader of the forest, always on the lookout for clues to the past lives of the land. As we walked the road, he pointed out telltale signs of farming on both sides of the road -- scars in boundary or "witness" trees, some a century or more old, that once defined property lines; breaks in the stone wall where farmers passed from field to field; rusted fence wire; leveled areas where crops had grown. When we came to the old homestead, Dick saw more than I had during my first exploration: crockery, a stove grate and -- more importantly -- a well, which I was lucky enough not to have fallen into the first time.

We followed the road only as far as the homestead that day, but later I met with Tom Cwiakala, Deputy Town Historian, who showed me an 1856 Biers Atlas map that traced the road, unnamed, from Hermance Road, past an abandoned building where the Woodhaven Girl Scout Camp is today, to Alexander, on to Graves Road, then hooking up with Parkis Mills Road and on into the Village of Galway. It was a major thoroughfare for Galway farmers on their way into town, bypassing the unfinished Sacandaga Road, or, as Rachael used to call it, the Swamp Road. Tom also pointed out a school house cited along the old road on the 1856 map. It was situated just east of where Woodhaven is today, close to the intersection with Alexander.

John Mechanick said he knew the abandoned road as Ambrose Road. It ran through his family's property and he had plenty of opportunities to see all manner of vehicles lunging over it, often leaving axles, tires and fenders in their wake. After a rain, cars would sink to their wheel wells in mud, he said. His father pulled the last one out in 1952 just before they closed the road for good, he told me -- adding with a smile -- "with his team of horses."

## More Feedback on Our Galway History Book!

We continue to receive positive feedback on our book via letters and e-mails from our members and former community residents. The following letter was received from Marlene Denison Wyatt:

*I recently received my ordered copy of your publication on the history of Galway and can hardly put it down! I scanned the pictures and captions, trying to identify what I could remember of the village and town and identify some of the people I remembered. I must admit that while I didn't necessarily remember faces, I certainly remember my Mother (Lena Male Denison) and Dad (Elwood Denison) mentioning their names.*

*The publication is an absolute gem! I love everything about it – the paper it's printed on, the quality of the writing, the reproduction of the photographs, and so on.*

*Thank you for all the time and effort you folks put into the preservation of events and memories we have of the wonderful town we grew up in and loved so dearly. May you be rewarded by knowing that your work is so appreciated and enjoyed by those of us who grew up there and were a part of its history.*

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## Chocolate Chip Pumpkin Bread

This delicious recipe was written down for Sue Surdyka after one of our members baked it for the December monthly meeting. It's perfect for the holidays!

2 cups white sugar  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree  
1 cup vegetable oil  
2/3 cup water  
4 eggs  
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
1 tablespoon ground nutmeg  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
1 cup miniature semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour three 9x5 inch loaf pans. In a large bowl, combine sugar, pumpkin, oil, water, and eggs. Beat until smooth. Blend in flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking soda, and salt. Fold in chocolate chips and walnuts. Fill loaf pans 1/2 to 3/4 full. Bake for one hour or until an inserted knife comes out clean. Cool on wire racks before removing from loaf pans.

## Book Reminder

Don't forget that our book, *Galway 1900 – 1949, A Photographic History*, is still available for purchase at the Galway branch of Ballston Spa National Bank, Galway Town Hall, Waterwheel Village, and Providence Town Hall. Books are also available for sale at monthly member meetings. A link to the order form is always available on the home page of our website at [galwaypreservationsociety.org](http://galwaypreservationsociety.org). The cost of the book is \$40. Checks can be made payable to Galway Preservation Society.

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## Of Interest to Our Members

Ray O'Connor of Saratoga, author of *She Called Him Raymond*, which is nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in General Non-Fiction, will be at the Galway Public Library on January 23 at 11:00 a.m. for a presentation and book signing. He will answer questions and there will be a drawing for one attendee to win a free, signed, hardcover edition of his book. *She Called Him Raymond* is the true story of a World War II hero, with details about the intense mental and physical training airmen went through, the dangers a 10-man crew faced while flying a B-17 over enemy territory and the love story between the airman and the author's mother.

*We are always seeking local history articles for our newsletter. Please get in touch if you have an article to submit, or just an idea for an article you would like to see in the newsletter. Please send articles, suggestions, or inquiries to [mcuffeperez@gmail.com](mailto:mcuffeperez@gmail.com) or call 944-5843. We reserve the right to edit submissions, with the author's approval.*

### **Galway Preservation Society**

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